

Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund Workshop

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Panel Report on the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

Overview of Oregon's system for funding watershed restoration

Oregon's watershed restoration program has four parts:

1. **Regulatory base** – existing environmental regulations
2. **Substantial investment in voluntary restoration efforts.** These efforts accomplish what regulation cannot: restoration on private lands.
3. **Monitoring program** – examines the cumulative effect of actions and whether they're having the desired results
4. **Scientific oversight** -- A trusted independent set of experts whom people put faith in. Their comments and challenges are incorporated into the program, so it can adaptively manage

Over the last year, PCSRF funds in Oregon have gone to all four of the above items. For example, the funding has been used to employ fish biologists over and above what Oregon was already doing. PCSRF funds have also enabled the state to expand its monitoring, by paying for the purchase of data sets. The independent science panel is partly funded by the federal money.

However, the bulk of the PCSRF funds in Oregon are spent on voluntary restoration. Oregon spends \$25 million annually on restoration. Of that, \$15 million is dedicated state lottery money. Over the last couple of years, OWEB has received \$110 million of project requests, which is two to three times what it is able to fund.

The federal money is seamlessly fed into the existing granting process. Huntington noted that funds for monitoring and technical capacity are the hardest to get.

Reporting – How do we do it better?

Huntington said his remarks on the issue of reporting will cover state and federal dollars together because the federal money supplements the state money in one seamless process.

The questions of accountability, effectiveness, and public understanding of restoration efforts present different challenges and require different reporting vehicles.

Below is a list of some of the reporting vehicles Oregon is using.

- 1) OWEB is ready to print its bi-annual report on the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds.

This report is effective in that it allows people to look at what's happening in their local area. It shows projects for a given basin, the investment being made in that basin, what funding sources are contributing, and what the stressors and challenges are in that area. It also shows accomplishments, types of activities, and completed projects. Showing what activities are going on is a demonstration of results that doesn't require waiting for 20 years.

This report provides a measure of accountability in a way that the public, private funders, and hopefully congress can understand. The document will be available on-line in early January. Hard copies will also be available.

2) OWEB is printing a portfolio document highlighting the types of projects in a "People Magazine" style using easy language. This documents addresses the challenge of making watershed enhancement and habitat improvement relevant to urban citizens. Various project types are discussed along with information on who worked on the example project and its meaning to the local community.

It is worth noting that private funds for restoration match government funding in Oregon by a two-to-one ratio. For every dollar spent on a project, 80 cents stays in the local economy, with a multiplier ranging from \$1.65 to \$2.50. With millions being spent on restoration, that type of economic value is significant. It also provides something to say about the benefits of restoration work in addition to its long-term environmental value. 26% of Oregon's jobs are related to resource-based industries, industries that would be hurt by a pure top-down regulatory approach.

The future

Over the coming year, Oregon will focus on accountability, performance measures, and telling its story. It is important to deliver the goods, without getting overly focused on the work. Huntington advised PCSRF participants not to underestimate the importance of having a good relationship with the funder.